

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny Hoyer today announced that the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations conference report which included, at the request of Congressman Hoyer, \$200,000 to help clean up the Anacostia River. The report also included \$156,000 to restore the Paint Branch and \$1.1 million to restore the Western Branch of the Patuxent River.

“The Anacostia River Watershed Comprehensive Plan being undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers will further contribute to the health and water quality of the river and its environs, and have significant environmental and economic impact on Prince George’s County,” said Congressman Hoyer. “I am pleased to once again secure funding for the project this year, and the \$200,000 provided in the bill will allow the Army Corps to develop an updated comprehensive plan for the Anacostia River and build upon its past successes in improving the health of this important regional resource. I will continue to work to secure funds for the Anacostia as I believe we have a responsibility to invest in this critical waterway for the surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, and visitors.” Last year the Congress provided \$160,000 to begin work on the comprehensive plan.

In the early 1990s, the Army Corps of Engineers completed a study of the present and future uses and problems of the Anacostia River’s water and related land resources. A comprehensive plan of environmental alternatives was developed. The reconnaissance report made a number of important recommendations to address the degraded river system that is a gateway to our nation’s capital. Since then, Rep. Hoyer has worked to fund a variety of Army Corps studies and projects in the watershed including the beneficial use of dredged materials, removal of fish passage blockages, and wetlands restoration. The quality of the watershed continues to improve greatly with these and efforts conducted by local, State, and other Federal agencies.

Congressman Hoyer has secured more than \$30 million over the years for projects to improve the water quality of the Anacostia River and to restore the health and natural beauty of the river and the surrounding natural resources. These improvements enhance public enjoyment of the river, and improve the health of plants and animals throughout the watershed.

Rep. Hoyer has also been an advocate for smaller waterways throughout the Anacostia watershed. The following project, funded by the Senate, was included in the final conference report.

Paint Branch Restoration: \$156,000

Over the last two years Congress has provided, at Rep. Hoyer's request, \$400,000 to support pre-construction, engineering and design work associated with this project. The Paint Branch, a tributary of the Anacostia River, has become blocked to spawning fish because of a Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission sewer main that was installed (properly) several decades ago, and has become exposed in recent years because of the degradation of the stream. Repairing the blockage would restore 6 miles of stream to the spawning habitat of the blue back and alewife herring, an unusually large amount of habitat to be restored by removing a single blockage. In some places the stream has moved as much as 150 feet laterally from its original banks, causing major erosion along the course of the stream. The Army Corps proposes to return the stream to its original banks, take measures to control its flow to prevent future erosion, and restore riparian buffers upstream to prevent further erosion and exacerbation of the problem.

Rep. Hoyer has also fought for funding to improve the overall health of the Patuxent River and its tributaries. The following project, funded by the Senate, was included in the final conference report.

Western Branch Patuxent River: \$1,158,000

The amount of pollution (point source and non-point source) within the Western Branch watershed represents an environmental hazard. This project will restore and create approximately sixteen acres of floodplain wetlands and six acres of wooded riparian habitat at three sites along the Western Branch in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Wetland habitat will be restored and created through the excavation of basins in the floodplain, amendment of soils to impede drainage, and increase their organic matter by planting the sites with a cover crops and native vegetation. Rep. Hoyer has helped secure more nearly \$3 million in the past to improve the water quality of the Patuxent River.

###